

Message Text

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SUBJ: DR. HUGHES RECOMMENDATIONS

PLEASE PASS DR. THOMAS O. JONES, NATIONAL SCIENCE
FOUNDATION, FOR RUSS O'NEAL. FROM DR. R.E. HUGHES

REF: --

1. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST I AM FORWARDING SOME
BRIEF COMMENTS ON THE THREE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD.

2. NSF SHOULD CONTINUE AN ACTIVE PROGRAM IN CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT (CD) BUT THE PURPOSES SHOULD BE CLEARLY DE-
FINED IN A POLICY STATEMENT. CD HAS THE CHARACTER OF
AN APPLIED RESEARCH ACTIVITY IN THAT IT IS DIRECTED
TOWARD A PREDETERMINED GOAL. IN BOTH THE PHYSICAL AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES, THE NEED FOR SPECIALIZED, DISCIPLINE
ORIENTED CURRICULA IS DECREASING AT THE SECONDARY
AND PRIMARY LEVELS. THUS, NSF CD ACTIVITY WILL PRINCIPALLY
BE DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE GENERAL UNDERSTANDING
OF SCIENCE AND TO ILLUMINATE THE ROLE OF THE SCIENCES
AND SCIENTIFIC THINKING IN MODERN SOCIETY.

A. WE HAVE OBSERVED THAT THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE VERY
CONTROVERSIAL, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES.
NEVERTHELESS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT AN INTEGRATED,
SYSTEMATIC EFFORT BE MADE TO STABILIZE SUCH A PROGRAM.
AN EFFECTIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY SHOULD BE DE-
SIGN. COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.
INSTEAD OF A SMALL NUMBER OF VERY LARGE EFFORTS, A
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LARGE NUMBER OF EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMS SHOULD BE TRIED.

SPECIALIZED CD ACTIVITIES FOR SPECIALIZED COMMUNITIES SUCH AS THE INNER CITY OR APPALACHIA SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. MOST OF ALL, THERE SHOULD BE A PARALLEL EFFORT TO INTEGRATE NEW DEVELOPMENTS, TO AGGREGATE IDEAS, TO DEVELOP AN INTELLECTUAL BASIS FOR THE TOTAL ACTIVITY.

3. NSF SHOULD NOT CONTINUE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION (CI) ACTIVITIES IN ITS PRESENT MODE OF OPERATION. IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO A CONTINUING CONTROVERSY INTO THE INDEFINITE FUTURE. THE UNDERLYING ISSUE IS PLAIN. IS IT APPROPRIATE TO USE MASSIVE FEDERAL RESOURCES TO DIRECTLY PROMULGATE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE MATERIALS IN THE NATIONS SCHOOL SYSTEMS?

A. IN PARTICULAR, IF CI IS TO BE CONTINUED, AND MANY WILL ARGUE IT MUST BE, A NUMBER OF ISSUES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED. FOR EXAMPLE, CONTINUING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DEVELOPERS AND PUBLISHERS, THE RATIONALE OF THE ROYALTY SYSTEM, THE SUPPORT OF A FEW LARGE CD ESTABLISHMENTS, THE NSF ROLE IN MONITORING CI, THE FRACTION OF THE TOTAL ACTIVITY THAT SHOULD GO TO TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTES, THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM, ETC.

4. NEW APPROACHES TO CI SHOULD BE EXPLORED BY NSF IN A STRUCTURED PROGRAM. STUDIES SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN WITH STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION TO ASSESS NEEDS AND MECHANISMS FOR CI OF SCIENCE CURRICULA. POSSIBLE ROLES FOR SUCH ORGANIZATIONS AS THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. NEW METHODS FOR THE RAPID AND WIDESPREAD DISSEMINATION OF THE INTELLECTUAL BASIS AND CONTENT OF CURRENT CD ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. PERHAPS OE, NIE AND STATE PARTICIPATION WITH NSF IN TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTES WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. THE FACT IS THAT THE ENTIRE SYSTEM IS POORLY UNDERSTOOD AND IF NSF IS TO CONTINUE TO INTERACT WITH IT ON A LARGE SCALE, AN EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO CLARIFY

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THE SITUATION FOR THE BOARD, FOR THE CONGRESS AND FOR THE PUBLIC.BUCHANAN

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